REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks are respectfully requested. Claims 1 and 21 are amended without prejudice or disclaimer.

Rejection of Claims 1-17 and 19-35 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-17 and 19-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gasper et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,278,943) ("Gasper et al.") in view of Walker et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/00449602) ("Walker"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that even if combined Gasper et al. and Walker et al. fail to teach each limitation of the claims.

We first turn to claim 1. The Office Action concedes that Gasper et al. do not specifically teach the last limitation of claim 1. Applicants note that the Office Action mischaracterizes this last limitation. For example, the Office Action states that Gasper et al. do not specifically teach "generating a new TTS voice and the second TTS voice and according to the user selected voice characteristic." Applicants' are not sure why the Office Action fails to appropriately characterize the last limitation of claim 1 but Applicants submit that there is an important distinction. Claim 1 necessarily involves three different TTS voices. The first TTS voice and the second TTS voice are selected by the user. The last or third TTS voice is the "new TTS voice" that is generated by blending the first TTS voice and the second TTS voice and according to the user selected voice characteristic. The way the Office Action characterized this limitation actually does not make sense because it basically states that there is a new TTS voice and the second TTS voice that are both generated according to the user's selected voice characteristic. However, there is no recitation in claim 1 that the second TTS voice is "generated according to the user's selected voice characteristic." It is the new TTS voice that involves a

blending of the first TTS voice and the second TTS voice that is generated to the at least one user-selected voice characteristic. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the mischaracterization in the Office Action is wrong on several accounts.

Notwithstanding the mischaracterization in the Office Action of the last limitation of claim 1, Applicants submit that Walker et al. fail to provide the missing teachings from Gasper et al. in order to arrive at this limitation. The Office Action cites Figure 1 (synthesized audio) and Figure 2 as teaching this limitation. Figure 1 of Walker et al. teach simply the output of the TTS engine farm 18 that is provided to voice application 16. There is no teaching in Walker et al. that the synthesized audio represents a new TTS voice that is generated by blending a first TTS voice and a second TTS voice and according to at least one user selected voice characteristic. Notably, paragraphs [0024] and [0025] discuss this synthesized audio. They explain that TTS engine 18 in the engine farm 19 converts or synthesizes weather report text from voice application into a computer generated audio speech. The TTS engine 18 then provides the audio speech of the weather report text to the telephone user via a voice application 16.

Later, in paragraph [0025], they teach that communication system 10 includes elements for preprocessing the text prior to the text being sent to TTS engine 18 for synthesis into speech. The basic invention of Walker et al. involves the concept of determining the context of text, such as using context detection, and then modifying the text based on the context of the text, i.e. by text cleaning. Thus, the text cleaner 24 shown in Figure 1 involves providing clean text to the TTS resource manager 28 which clean text is provided to the TTS farm 19 such that TTS engine 18 can produce the synthesized audio. Therefore, Applicants submit that that concept of the synthesized audio shown in Figure 1 of Walker et al. simply says nothing regarding generating a new TTS voice by blending a first TTS voice and a second TTS voice and according to at least one user select voice characteristic.

Figure 2 of Walker et al. also fails to disclose this feature. Figure 2 shows a simple method which involves detecting context of the text, modifying the text as a function of the context of the text and converting the modified text into speech. There is no discussion of a first TTS voice or a second TTS voice and certainly no discussion of generating a new TTS voice by blending the first TTS voice and the second TTS voice and according to at least one user select voice characteristic. Paragraphs [0040] and [0041] discuss Figure 2 and simply say nothing regarding this particular claim limitation.

Applicants also do not acquiesce that it would be obvious to one of skill in the art to combine these references. However, given the fact that Walker et al. fails to teach the last limitation of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that we have provided substantial evidence in support of the patentability of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable and in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-9 each depend from claim 1 and recite further limitations therefrom. Accordingly, inasmuch as the parent claim is patentable, Applicants submit that these dependent claims are patentable and in condition for allowance as well.

With regards to claim 10, the Office Action on page 4 provides the same analysis and makes the same error in terms of characterizing the teachings of the second limitation of claim 10. Furthermore, Walker et al.'s Figures 1 and 2 are cited as providing the supporting disclosure that matches the step of presenting the user with a new TTS voice comprising the selected TTS voice blended with at least one other TTS voice to achieve the selected voice characteristics. Applicants submit that based on the discussion set forth above, that the concept of presenting the user with a new TTS voice that is a blending of a selected TTS voice with at least one other TTS voice is not taught or suggested in the references. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 10 and dependent claims 11-17 and 19-20 are patentable and in condition for allowance.

Claims 21-27 are patentable for the same reasons set forth above relative to claim 1.

Method claims 28-31 as well as the TTS voice claims of 32-35 are also patentable and in condition for allowance for the same reasons as those set forth above.

CONCLUSION

Having addressed all rejections and objections, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner for Patents is authorized to charge or credit the **Novak, Druce & Quigg, LLP, Account No. 14-1437** for any <u>deficiency or overpayment</u>.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

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